WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.    An Internet based method for ordering and supplying selected coded labels to be applied to a variety of fruits and/or vegetables at a plurality of labelling sites, comprising the steps:

continuously and automatically inventorying the supply of different coded labels on hand for each said labelling site,

storing said label inventory data for each of said plurality of labelling sites,

allowing approved customers or representatives to initiate a computerized display of a portion of said stored label inventory data, and

providing means to allow said approved customer or representative to order additional selected labels for one or more of said labelling sites.

2.    The method of claim 1 wherein each of said different coded labels is carried on a label roll mounted on a cassette and comprising the further steps:

providing in each of said label rolls an identifying code which uniquely describes the particular label identity and quantity of labels,

reading and inputting said identifying code when such label roll is activated and deactivated in a labelling machine, and

providing means for counting the number of labels utilized from each of said label rolls as said label roll is utilized in a labelling process.

1    3.    The method of claim 2 wherein said identifying code is applied only to approved

2    label rolls and wherein the use of non-approved label rolls is to be detected and measured,

3    comprising the further steps:

4            providing means on each labelling machine to detect the activation of a non-

5    approved label roll,

6            providing means to count and record the number of non-approved labels utilized

7    by said labelling machine, and

8            automatically recording and storing the number of non-approved labels utilized

9    by said labelling machine.

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11   4.    The method of claim 2 wherein said identifying code is applied only to approved

12   label rolls and wherein the use of non-approved label rolls is to be detected and prevented,

13   comprising the further steps:

14           providing means on each labelling machine to detect the loading of a non-

15   approved label roll, and

16           providing means on each of said labelling machines for shutting down said

17   labelling machine when a non-approved label roll is loaded thereon.

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19   5.    The method of claim 2 comprising the further step:

20           inputting into each labelling machine the coding for the particular fruit or

21   vegetable prior to beginning a labelling run,

22           comparing said inputted coding to said label roll identifying code, and

23           beginning the labelling run only if the inputted code matches said label roll

24   identifying code.

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6.    The method of claim 2 comprising the further step:

inputting into each labelling machine the coding for the particular fruit or vegetable prior to beginning a labelling run,

comparing said inputted coding to said label roll identifying code, and

shutting down said labelling machine if the inputted code does not match said label roll identifying code.

7.    The method of claim 2 comprising the further steps:

providing means in each of said labelling machines to count the number of labels applied by that machine in a given period of time,

storing the number of labels applied by each of said labelling machines in a given period of time.

8.    The method of claim 7 comprising the further steps:

automatically displaying predetermined recommended service required by each of said labelling machines as a function of the total number of labels applied by each labelling machine in a given time frame.

9.    The method of claim 7 comprising the further step:

using the stored number of labels applied by each labelling machine in a given time frame to automatically generate financial billing statements for use of said labelling machine based upon the number of labels applied in a given time frame.

10. The method of claim 2 wherein it is desired to automatically enter into the inventory data additional label inventory corresponding to a label order being delivered to a specific labelling site, comprising the further steps:

notifying a labelling site when an order for coded labels is being shipped to said labelling site,

shipping said order to said labelling site by a shipping method wherein an automated notice is generated and transmitted to a data storage medium when said order is delivered to said labelling site,

inputting said delivered order to said data storage medium to increase the recorded inventory stored on said storage medium by an amount corresponding to said delivered order, and

automatically notifying said labelling site that said delivered label order is being added to its inventory.

11. The method of claim 1 comprising the further steps:

storing at a data storage medium expected label demand for each of said labelling sites,

periodically comparing the recorded label inventory recorded on said data storage medium for each labelling site with said expected label demand, and

generating warning flags whenever said comparison indicates a predetermined low label inventory for any of said labelling sites.

12. The method of claim 2 comprising the further steps:

historically tracking demand for a given particular coded label at a given number of said labelling sites over a given period of time, and

utilizing said historic label demand to schedule and to initiate production runs of said particular coded labels.

13. The method of claim 12 comprising the further step:

scheduling and initiating said production runs in a manner to minimize the number of production runs for a given coded label within a given time frame.

14. An apparatus for use in a labelling machine, said apparatus being capable of carrying a predetermined quantity of selected coded labels used to label fruits and/or vegetables, said coded labels identifying a specific type of fruit or vegetable, the apparatus comprising:

a core,

a label strip wound onto said core, said label strip carrying a known quantity of labels each carrying data relating to a specific, branded or generic, fruit or vegetable,

a cassette carrying said core and label strip,

a data tag means carried by said core, said data tag means carrying data sufficient to uniquely identify the labels on said label strip including the specific label identity and quantity, and

means allowing said data tag means to be read automatically when said cassette is loaded into said labelling machine.

15. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said data tag means is a radio frequency (RF) tag.

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16.    The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said data tag means is a contact tag.

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17.    The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said data tag means is a Dallas 1 wire tag.

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